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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001030

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EB A/S ANTHONY WAYNE; SA/INS FOR J. BRENNIG, N.
DEAN; PLEASE PASS TO TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION TASK FORCE;
TREASURY FOR C. CARNES

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [CE](#) [MV](#)

SUBJECT: SRI LANKAN POST-TSUNAMI RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE
(JUNE 09, 2005)

1. (U) This cable is for the post-tsunami IAWG meeting on
June 9, 2005.

Transitional Housing

2. (SBU) Transitional housing re-entered the limelight
this week following a meeting convened by the Finance
Secretary at the request of the International Financial

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Institutions (IFIs). While the Government has been
preparing to declare victory on the transitional front,
there are concerns that the number nearing completion
(30,000) may be insufficient for overall demand.
Apparently many victims continue to stay with relatives or
close friends, a trend that UN and other agencies believe
may be unsustainable. The GSL has agreed to review the
situation.

Monitoring Aid: Donor Assistance Database

3. (SBU) The GSL (TAFREN), in partnership with UNDP,
unveiled the Donor Assistance Database (DAD) program on
June 8. Econchief and USAID Program Analyst attended. The
program is a comprehensive, web-based interface that is
user friendly and intuitive. As with most applications of
this nature, its success will be a direct reflection of the
seriousness with which both the GSL and the donor community
use it. It is open for all donors, including NGOs, and
TAFREN will initially populate the data with information it
has from donors. Individual donors will then be able to
update and add information as their programs progress.
UNDP ResRep told Econchief that they had tried to get the
GSL to implement such a database prior to the tsunami, but
the GSL had resisted. We hope that if successful, the
database will expand to include tracking non-tsunami
assistance as well. Access should be possible for
Washington-based agencies -- we will double check. The
initial user names and passwords should be available in
about another 7 - 10 days and the program is to be fully
operational by August 20 (including additional components to
track housing and livelihood programs more comprehensively).

100m/200m DVC Follow-Up

4. (SBU) We continue to seek funding to bring three
participants from the May 19 DVC on coastal management to
Colombo for follow-on discussions. The President has
appointed a committee to review the 100/200 meter buffer
zone and, reportedly, has asked them to report back in six
weeks. The committee is headed by her personal secretary,
Mr. W.J.S. Karunaratne and includes representatives from
Urban Planning, TAFREN, Coastal Conservation Commission and
the Geological Survey. TAFREN Housing Director Gehan
Wijegoonewardene told Econchief he had been asked to
participate, but that there is still some confusion as to
who will sit on the committee and when the six-week clock
starts ticking. (Note: Wijegoonewardene expressed some
dismay at being appointed, as he is planning to return to
his regular employment (with MAS Ltd, one of Sri Lanka's
largest garment manufacturers) on July 1. Econchief
posited that that was okay; he could make garments to pay
the bills and rebuild the country as a hobby. End note).
Post would appreciate any consideration Washington agencies
could give to helping to sponsor travel and per diem for
the three USG officials. Public Affairs is looking at
possible travel money in Colombo. USAID is also pursuing
possible funding through OFDA.

GSL Outreach

5. (SBU) Treasury Secretary PB Jayasundera has begun a
series of out-station meetings with citizens to monitor
progress on rebuilding. Jayasundera is not the warmest of
government officials, so his sudden populist turn is
interesting. We have been invited to attend these meetings

and will try to have representation at some. Ambassador in particular believes he has noticed a change in Jayasundera's outlook since the Development Forum in Kandy, which, as we reported, was very candid and where the Secretary provided a very open, honest assessment of

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challenges and problems, and the difficulties in finding suitable solutions.

Debt Relief

16. (U) On debt relief, Sri Lanka has accepted our offer, but has not, we believe, concluded an MOU with the Paris Club - though they have indicated their intention to do so. Post understands Washington agencies are scrubbing current draft of the bilateral agreement proposal. We look forward to receiving it as soon as possible.

Maldives

17. (U) Econchief discussed the US contribution to the Maldives' tsunami relief fund with Ministry of Finance Executive Director Riluwan Shareef on June 6 and is planning to visit Maldives with USAID program analyst on June 13 to discuss specific projects. According to Shareef, Maldives sees three primary sectors with funding gaps - 1) water and sanitation; 2) transportation and access; and, 3) administration and capacity building. We are inclined toward the first two, which we believe would include more tangible, measurable projects such as waste water treatment, waste management facilities, jetties, sea walls, etc. We will have more info on this following our meetings next week.

18. (U) As we understand the current thinking in Washington, the Department, via the Embassy, will be the primary point-of-contact with the GORM with regard to establishing a bilateral agreement to give the money and L is considering what kind of agreement is needed. At post, ECON, USAID and PD will work together to monitor and publicize implementation. We would appreciate further guidance on how to establish a bilateral agreement.
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